Please returning to → Sierra Historic Sites Assoc. Library
Property Of H.W. Gay Oakhurst
C.3

THE MADERA COUNTY HISTORIAN

MADERA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY

Volume 6 - Number 3 July, 1966

OUR YOUNG HISTORIANS REPORT

The following stories have been selected from a group of stories submitted by students from Coarsegold and North Fork Elementary Schools.

The contest this year was sponsored by the Coarsegold Farm Bureau, the North Fork Historical Society and Mr. Nathan Sweet of Oakhurst. This is the third year the Madera County Historian has given space in the third quarterly edition to the stories of students.

These stories have been written by the students and judged by a committee in each district. Space will not permit every story to be printed but we have printed the first, second and third prizes and a few others; the latter are printed because of unusual quality, originality and historical interest.

* * * * * * *

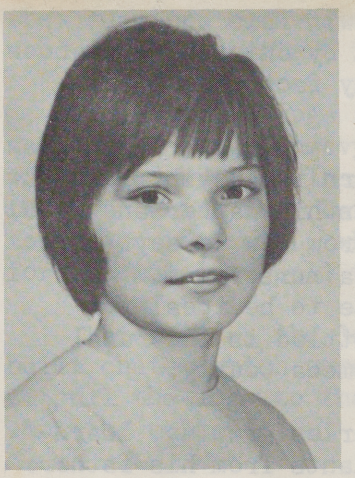
First Prize	$ 15.00	Roryann Muhly	Grade 7	North Fork
Second Prize	$ 10.00	Heidi Sturm	Grade 4	North Fork
Third Prize	$ 5.00	Rhonda Rogozienski	Grade 6	North Fork
Honorable Mention	$ 2.00	David Otto	Grade 6	North Fork
Honorable Mention	$ 2.00	Audrey Rogozienski	Grade 4	North Fork
Indian Brushes		Mervin Sherman	Grade 3	North Fork
Charley Parkerson		Robert Hogan		North Fork
First Prize	$ 15.00	Linda Kirby	Grade 8	Coarsegold
Second Prize	$ 10.00	Mike Kirby	Grade 7	Coarsegold
Third Prize	$ 5.00	Jeremie James		Coarsegold
Nelder's Grove		Randall Cooper	Grade 4	Coarsegold

* * * * * * *

THE "HOTEL HOUSE"
by
Roryann Muhly

Today in North Fork there is a high hill with a two story house on top. The history of this house begins when Benjamin Harrison was president of the United States. He sold this hill and some of the surrounding land, which is now North Fork, to David C. Hale. Hale divided the land into sections and sold the land to many people.

Later a man named Tully bought a section of the land, in the name of his wife. The land he bought was the big hill. They built a house on the top of this hill about 1850. There is



also a tale to go with the Tully family. While Roy Blood, who worked at the Forestry Service, was living he would relate this tale to anyone who would listen.

One day the Tully's little boy became seriously ill. A few days later the little boy died. It was fashionable in those days to bury the dead in the front yard. So the Tullys buried their little boy in their front yard. Since then no one has been

able to find the coffin or any remains of the little boy.

Later the Tully family sold the house and property to the Herricks. The Herricks in turn sold it to the Humphreys. Later the Humphreys sold the property for $900.00 to the Muhlys.

The Muhlys turned the house into a hotel called "Nob Hill." They built another floor on top of the first floor. The second floor was made into rooms for the lodgers. Downstairs was a large dining room and entertainment room. Here the men played cards, etc., and the women talked. They also built small cabins on the land.

Later Mrs. Muhly housed the fire workers until they built their own camp.

Today the same house stands on the hill there. Now Mr. Muhly's grandson and his wife own the land. They are remodeling the house and will reside there after they retire. So, now you can no longer call it a hotel, but a "rest home."

* * * * * * *

CHARLES HOWARD SHINN
by
Heidi Sturm

People are important in the history of a community. A person who was important in the history of North Fork was Charles Howard Shinn. In order to gather information about his life, Earl Morrow, a person who knew Shinn for several years, was contacted. Some of the following information was related by Mr. Morrow. Other details came from a book that belongs to Mr. Morrow. This book, Mining Camps, was written by Shinn, and the introduction contains many facts about Shinn's life.

Charles Shinn was born in Austin, Texas, in the spring of 1852 when his father and mother were moving west from New Jersey. His father, James Shinn, was a nurseryman. He found California's climate to be ideal for this kind of work. He settled in the rural community of Niles in Alameda County.

It was here that Charles grew up, learning a great deal about plants from his father. The gold rush was over. Many miners remained working the deep quartz mines. Other miners moved on to the Comstock, while still others moved to the cities. It was this last group of miners that Charles became acquainted with as a boy. Charles heard them talk about the gold rush. Much of the information later used in his books and magazine articles was absorbed from listening to ex-prospectors talking about their experiences.

Charles had a great respect for education as did his father. Charles attended college (University of California) for two years earning a diploma to teach school.

Shinn was talented in writing, and at eighteen he began selling poetry to California newspapers and magazines. Later he began writing factual articles about farming, fruit-growing and home gardens. Newspaper editors recognized that he was well informed on the subjects he wrote about, and he knew a surprising amount about many things. This led him into five years of newspaper work. At thirty years of age Shinn went back east to further his education at Johns Hopkins University. Its president, Daniel Coit Gilman, was a former teacher of his. Gilman directed his study in history and government.

After graduation Shinn sent Scribner's the manuscript of the book, Mining Camps, put together from his college papers.

Shinn stayed for a few months in New York. Then he returned to California to help his sister, Millicent, run the Overland Monthly in San Francisco. In 1888 he married Julia Tyler of Oakland. The opportunity to combine his interest in agriculture with writing came in 1890. In that year he became Inspector of the Experiment Stations of the Agricultural Department of the University of California.

During his eleven years of university work "conservation" became a household word. Shinn had long preached conservation. As the idea grew in Washington Shinn set about promoting it in his writings. He continually reminded the public that waste of the national resources would lead to national bankruptcy. The idea became a crusade with him, as it did with Gifford Pinchot and Theodore Roosevelt. Shinn became a member of the National Forest

Commission in the middle 1890's.

Shinn was the kind of person who liked crusades, and his wife encouraged him in battle to save natural resources from the selfish profit of private lumber companies. In 1901 he was offered the position of Forest Examiner and then Head Ranger of the Sierra Forest Reserve.

Shinn moved to North Fork with his wife and daughter in 1905. They bought the old Malum Ranch on Malum Ridge. There Shinn built a house called "Peace Cabin" which denoted their way of life. Here at his home Shinn set up the first headquarters of the Sierra Forest Reserve.

Although Shinn's work required trips to Washington, he contributed much to the community. Shinn was a modest and gentle man. His friends came from all walks of life. Many intellectual and political friends came to visit; yet he was always ready to help the downtrodden. As Shinn grew older he never lost any of his humor or the conviction that the upright man would prevail - but even if he didn't, no man should be otherwise.

Mrs. Shinn was a very capable person in her own right. She took care of the clerical work at the headquarters. Like her husband, she was gentle and kind and did a great deal of social work.

Shinn left his work in 1911. His good friend, Pinchot, was dismissed from the Forest Service by President Taft. Shinn was charged with dealing unfairly with grazing permits and an investigation followed which cleared his name completely. Shinn felt his usefulness to the Forest Service had come to an end. He did not become bitter, but continued writing for newspapers and magazines up and down the state.

Mrs. Shinn continued to work for the Forest Service until 1924. Realizing that her husband did not have long to live, Mrs. Shinn sold Shinn Ranch (now known as the Putney Ranch). They moved to Ukiah where their daughter lived, and he died that same year at the age of seventy-two years.

The Forest Service quickly named a Sierra peak in his honor on the upper San Joaquin River.

Shinn is a fine example of the outstanding people who helped to mold this community in its early history. Although the people who knew him regarded him as radical, he was a man with vision and insight. North Fork may not claim him as its own, but the people who knew him are proud of the years he shared with them.

* * * * * * *

PECKINPAH MILL

by

Rhonda Rogozienski

The old Peckinpah Mill was one of the first logging outfits in this area. It was located about nine miles from North Fork on the Cascadel Road.

There is nothing there now but a large pile of sawdust remaining of one of our first logging industries. It was started about 1900.

The logs were cut by the lumberjacks with large cross-cut saws. This is a saw that two men, one on each end pull. The logs were then bucked by a bucking crew. The limbing crew then came in and cut all the limbs off.

To yard the logs in from where they were cut they had a steam donkey which was called a "spool," because as it would pull the logs in the cable would wind around like a large spool. The engine that operated the spool was a steam engine. There were men hired to haul water from the nearest creek by live donkeys, to keep them supplied with water. They also had to cut wood for the engine. They did not use coal.

To haul the logs into the mill they had a wagon with large, heavy iron rim wheels. This was pulled by a twelve mules team. Usually the road which they carried the logs on was a foot deep with dust, which made it very hard for the mules to pull the load.

Later on as the logging progressed they built chutes which were a mile or more long, to pull the logs to the mill (thus doing away with the mules).

The chutes were made of lumber built in V shapes. They were greased heavily so the logs would slide up easily.

Another steam donkey again pulled these logs.

At the mill they were then cut into boards and loaded on wagons pulled by ten to twelve mules.

The mules were very well trained and each had a name. They knew exactly how to pull around a turn. The two leaders of the team wore a set of eight bells. As they would go on their journey carrying the lumber you could hear the bells ringing along.

The road from the mill down to South Fork, which was a station, was very, very steep. The man driving the wagon would stay overnite at the Peckinpah Hotel which was located where South Fork is now.

After resting they resumed their trip to Friant station where the lumber was taken away by train.

* * * * * * *

HAND SAWS TO POWER SAWS
by
David Otto

"Timber!" This call was once needed to warn unsuspecting loggers of a falling tree. However, with modern chain saws the call is hardly needed for the saw itself can be heard a mile away. This shows how logging has progressed in the past sixty-five years.

Logging, being the chief industry of North Fork, is very important. Years ago hand saws were used to cut the trees down. It was hard labor and a very lengthy process, but now with modern power saws trees are cut rapidly and not much labor is needed to run one.

In the days when hand saws were used, you would put a man on both sides of the saw to push or pull in turn. After a while a cracking sound would be heard, a shout of "Timber" would ring out and the tree would crash to the ground, then the limbs would be taken off and it was ready to go to the mill.

In the time it takes to cut down one tree with a hand saw you could at least be cutting on the third with a power saw, so with the modern power saw labor is less and it is much faster.

* * * * * * *

NORTH FORK RECREATION CENTER
by
Audrey Rogozienski

The place that is now our recreation center was first a recreation center for our local Indians.

About twenty years ago the Indians of North Fork would put on a rodeo there on the Fourth of July. The Indians would ride their own horses and had a great time. Anyone that wanted to watch was welcome. Everyone brought their own lunch, and after a wonderful day of get-together they would leave for home.

The creek there (that is now our swimming pool), was then a swimming pool for most Indian boys. The water was swift and plentiful.

Later on Mr. J. A. Thomason leased this land and kept a lot of his horses there. When North Fork wanted a recreation center, the North Fork school got this land.

The Recreation Center now is the place where we have our Loggers' Jamborees, Indian Day Celebration, and other community activities.

* * * * * * *

INDIAN BRUSHES
by
Mervin Sherman

Indians have made brushes for many years.

I can make a brush! First we dig around the soap weed. We then take it out and shake off the dirt. We cut the hair off, and boil the center to make the soap. We put the dried hairs together, and tie the base with string. We cut the top and bottom smooth. Then we put the sticky soap on the base to make a handle.

We tie our brush on sticks to dry. After it has dried for about two days, we put it in the place where there is a fire, and tie it on

a rack. This hardens the base and dries it all out.

We like our brushes to brush our clothes, brush dirt from our beds, brush our hearths, and many other things.

* * * * * * *

CHARLEY PARKERSON
by
Robert Hogan

It was in the eighteen hundreds when Charley Parkerson needed a job. One day Charley found one as a stagecoach driver.

Charley got good pay and drove the stage for many years. His route was from Mariposa to Sonora. He had to go over the Merced and Tuolumne Rivers.

One day there was a flood and Charley made it through the rivers which were overflowing their banks.

One day no one had seen Charley. The stagecoach left without Charley. The doctor went out to Charley's cabin and found Charley dead from old age. The doctor performed an autopsy and found that Charley had never been a man but a woman driving a stagecoach all of her life!

\- - - - -

(The following information was given our editors and makes the above story even more interesting.)

Quoting from the California Oddfellows and Rebekah's Paper in the October 1965 issue:

"The Soquel Lodge #137 celebrated its 98th anniversary. William Penberthy gave a talk on some of the early members, especially Charles Parkhurst or Charley Parkerson. He was the only woman ever to succeed in joining the Odd Fellows Lodge. Charley was initiated into the Soquel Lodge on October 18, 1867, and kept his identity until his death December 28, 1868, when the autopsy revealed Charley was really a woman."

"Mr. Penberthy further pointed out that Charley voted at the Soquel Fire House as a registered voter of Santa Cruz County on November 3, 1868, making her the first woman in the United States to vote at an election."

* * * * * * *

JOURNEY TO YOSEMITE
by
Linda Kirby

Years ago a journey to Yosemite was practically impossible, then Chinese laborers built the Southern Pacific railroad line in 1886. It ran near Highway Ninety-Nine, as it is today. The real journey began at Berenda. You would change trains and travel to the Daulton Ranch, which once boasted 18,000 acres. H. Clay Daulton, Sr. and Jonathan Rea owned the ranches in the area. Rea drove the first sheep from Missouri to California. From there you would go to Raymond or "Wild Cat Station." There was a turn-table in Raymond and the train went back to Berenda. If you were too impatient or had lots of courage you could ride the legendary stage, "Cannon Ball," that traveled from Raymond to Yosemite Valley in one day and had to change horses every few miles.

Next stop was Grub Gulch which had 5,000 people at the turn of the century. Old timers say that $15,000,000 was taken from the Gambetta mines before flooding occurred and stopped further mining. The mines employed 500 men.

Before Grub Gulch was the Summit House, where Mr. and Mrs. Will Footman might have served you cold water on their porch.

From there you went to Gertrude where the lumber flumes started. Later, Sugar Pine bought the Gertrude flume, and several others, and extended the flume to Madera (meaning wood). It was the first and largest lumber flume in the mountains. There is so much poison oak in the Gertrude area, that it is sometimes known as "Poison Switch."

Next was Ahwahnee, the Indian name for "deep grassy valley." The Yosemite Indians (grizzly bears) lived in "deep grassy valley."

Nipinnawasee was the next stop. (Indian for "home of the wild deer.")

Much later toll was paid for the road that Mr. Grant built. Mr. Grant named Miami Mt. for Miami, Florida, his former residence.

At long last Wawona is reached where Galen Clark used to have the old Clark's Station during the days when only hiking and horseback got you into Yosemite Valley. You would probably stay at the Wawona Hotel, owned and managed by the Washburn brothers. After buying Clark's Station they had made vast changes. Now the long journey is over, you may wonder

if the uncomfortable journey was worth it, but the next morning after looking at the breathtaking view you realize it was worth it many, many times over.

The Southern Pacific Railroad was abandoned in the 1940's. There is now no station at Berenda or Raymond. Grub Gulch is completely gone except for a cattle pen and a few forlorn rose bushes. The large 60 mile lumber flume is gone except for a few traces of wood. The road is changed and paved. That long journey is made quickly and comfortably. There are many, many changes, but if it wasn't for our courageous and hardworking ancestors most of us wouldn't be able to view the awe-inspiring view of Yosemite Valley.

* * * * * * *

THE MADERA-SUGAR PINE LUMBER FLUME
by
Mike Kirby

The Madera-Sugar Pine Lumber flume carried pine and cedar lumber from Sugar Pine to Madera. It was the largest and first flume in the mountains.

The flume had a V-shape. Parts of it sat on the ground while other parts sat on trestles over fifty feet high. It was about sixty miles long.

Water for the flume came from the Fresno River and other streams along the way. The water was about one and a half feet deep. Waste gates were used to get rid of excess water.

Lumber shipping started on the first of June and ended the first of December. Repairs were made during the other months.

Salt Springs, Poison Switch, Confident, Ellerbrock, French Graveyard, Rhals, China Store, and Twelve Mile were sections where the lumber was checked and tied.

To keep the wood together, iron clamps were put on the ends of each stack, wooden wedges were driven between the boards to make the clamps fit tightly, then the clamped lumber was tied together with ropes to form a long endless train as more bundles were tied to the end all the time as it floated down the flume on its long journey to Madera.

One of the sections, Ellerbrock, was only about a half mile from our house (which has been here since the 1920's.)

The flume closed down in 1932. Some broken down parts of the flume can be seen today. One part which went through a tunnel between Rhals and China Store is still standing but will be covered by the water of the Hidden Dam project in a few years.

* * * * * * *

HOW MADERA COUNTY WAS FORMED
by
Jeremie James

The Madera people wanted to split from Fresno County and have Madera County. The Fresno people didn't want to split and there were more Fresno people than Madera people. The Madera people were afraid that if they would vote that they would lose and the Fresno people would win.

One day the Madera people got together and made a plan.

The voting meeting came about and they made sure that the Madera people got there first and got all the seats so the Fresno people had to stand up in the back of the room. The meeting started and the Madera County Chairman called for a vote about the splitting of Fresno County. He asked that all those in favor stand up and since the Fresno people were already standing up, the vote went unanimous. So that is how Madera County was formed.

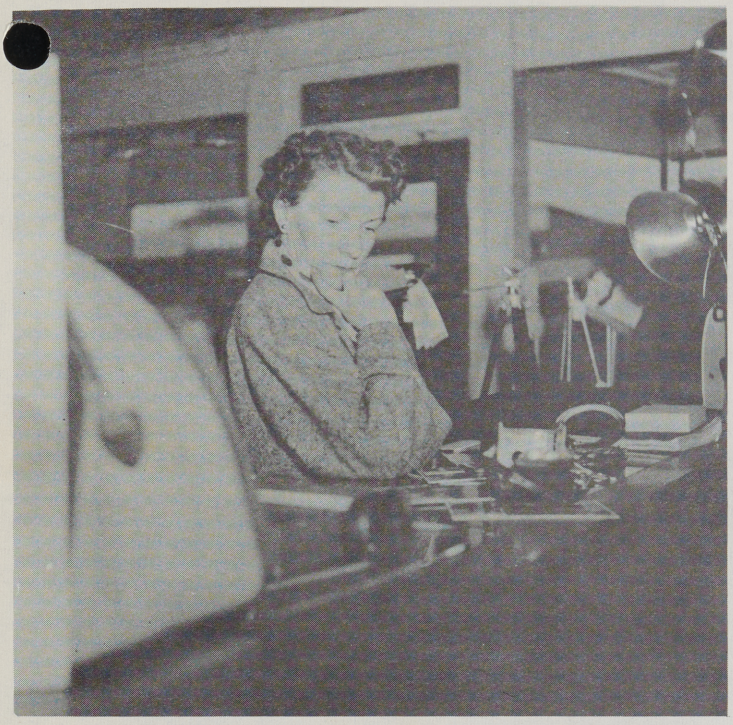
* * * * * * *

NELDER'S GROVE
by
Randall Cooper

Nelder Grove was an old prospector who had found a gold claim. Two men found out about the gold claim and were waiting at his cabin one night. He came home and the men shot him, took his gold, and burned his cabin down. The men who took Nelder's gold were caught and put in prison for the rest of their lives.

You can see what is left of the cabin about ten miles from the camp.

* * * * * * *



JUDGE MARCIA PUTNEY

MADERA COUNTY'S FIRST WOMAN JUDGE

Madera County, and particularly North Fork area, has reason to be proud and grateful to Mrs. Marcia Putney.

Mrs. Putney was named Judge of the Sierra Justice Court in 1945 to replace the resigning judge of that court. In 1948 she was elected to the judgeship and was re-elected until her retirement in January 1965.

Mrs. Putney was born in Minnesota and came to North Fork in 1934. She was well known throughout Madera County and beyond. She was a person of many interests, one who had a real concern for others.

Mrs. Putney was an accomplished artist; her paintings were exhibited in various places throughout the San Joaquin Valley.

The Madera County Historical Society wishes to dedicate this issue of the Historian to Mrs. Marcia Putney because of her great interest in the Madera Historical Society; she was the second president of the Society; her great appreciation for the early history of Madera County and because she was a fine person and one we may remember with great pride.

Mrs. Putney passed away in Fresno in September 1965 after a long illness.

When her Will was read it revealed among her several bequests that she had given 80 acres of land to Madera County to be used in some way to benefit mentally retarded children, and also several files of papers, documents, photographs, and historical data that are invaluable as research material and documentary information was left to the Madera County Historical Society.

Mrs. Putney left this material so well organized, dated and labeled, that those working in the storage center can easily catalog and file it.

In looking through this material one can readily see her vast interest in Madera County, history, people, folklore, community problems and activities, and her love for the mountains.

The Madera County Historical Society is grateful that Mrs. Putney cared enough for the

preservation of all the material willed to us, so that many people will benefit in the years to come.

The Madera County Historical Society is proud to dedicate this issue of the Madera County Historian to Judge Marcia M. Putney, first woman judge in Madera County.

* * * * * * *

Many people recall Judge Klette and know of his many accomplishments. Among the papers of Mrs. Putney were some stories told by Judge Klette and published in the Fresno Bee in 1942 by John Anderson. At a later date the Historian hopes to publish the life story of Judge Klette.

In one of Judge Klette's true stories of early day highway banditry, the robbers lost their loot and escaped prison sentence, but two other men found the gold and went to jail. The only one who got anything out of the crime was a man who panned some of the stolen gold.

The gold, $8,300 of it, came from the McNally mine at Hildreth twelve miles up the San Joaquin River from Friant. In the '80's Hildreth was quite a mining town. The McNally mine is reputed to have given up approximately $2,000,000 in gold.

Sometimes the mine owner acted as his own messenger in transporting his gold shipments. On such trips a guard always road ahead. On other occasions the gold was shipped by Wells-Fargo Express.

On July 4, 1885, the $8,300 shipment of gold ingots was dispatched by express. When the stagecoach bearing the shipment was about two and a half miles from Finegold Creek, a solitary holdup man halted the vehicle. The express messenger threw out the box containing the gold and drove on to O'Neals, where he reported the holdup.

In the meantime the robber cached the loot and set fire to the country. He lost himself, temporarily at least, among the fire fighters who turned out from the surrounding district.

One man was arrested as the highwayman and the express messenger was charged with complicity in the crime. Their trial in Fresno resulted in a jury disagreement and the case eventually was dismissed.

While the two suspects were in jail word came that a Mexican and a Negro were having a hilarious time at the Mexican border. The source of the funds financing their prolonged spree was suspicious. They were arrested and confessed they had found the cached McNally gold.

The holdup man had hidden the box of gold in a hollow stump. The fire which he set to cover his trail had revealed the hiding place by burning the stump. The Mexican and Negro said they had found the gold while climbing around the rough country, hoping to cash in on the Wells-Fargo reward of $1,500 for recovery of the loot. The difference between $1,500 and $8,300 was too much for them when they saw the gold. They chopped the ingots into convenient sizes and headed for the border. After their border spree they were sent to the penitentiary.

It was a Friant man who got some personal return from the crime. He gathered up and panned the soil where the loot finders had chopped up the ingots. His return amounted to about $40.

* * * * * * *

MADERA LORE

For the third year the Junior English Class, under the direction of their instructor, Mrs. Emily Wogaman has published a book entitled "Madera Lore." There are no more copies available of the 1964 or 1965 book but there are some remaining of the 1966 book. They are priced at $2.50 per copy and you may secure them at the Madera Daily Tribune Office, the Fruit Basket Restaurant in Madera, or write directly to Mrs. Emily Wogaman, 121 So. L St., Madera, California.

* * * * * * *

THE MADERA COUNTY HISTORIAN

Contributors - Students of Coarsegold and North Fork Elementary Schools.

Managing Editors - Madera County Historical Society Board of Directors

THE MADERA COUNTY HISTORIAN is published quarterly in January, April, July, and October by the Madera County Historical Society, P. O. Box 478, Madera, California, 93637. Subscription, 50¢ per copy, $2.00 per year, is included in membership in the Society. Please credit "The Madera County Historian" when reproducing any part.

* * * * * * *